

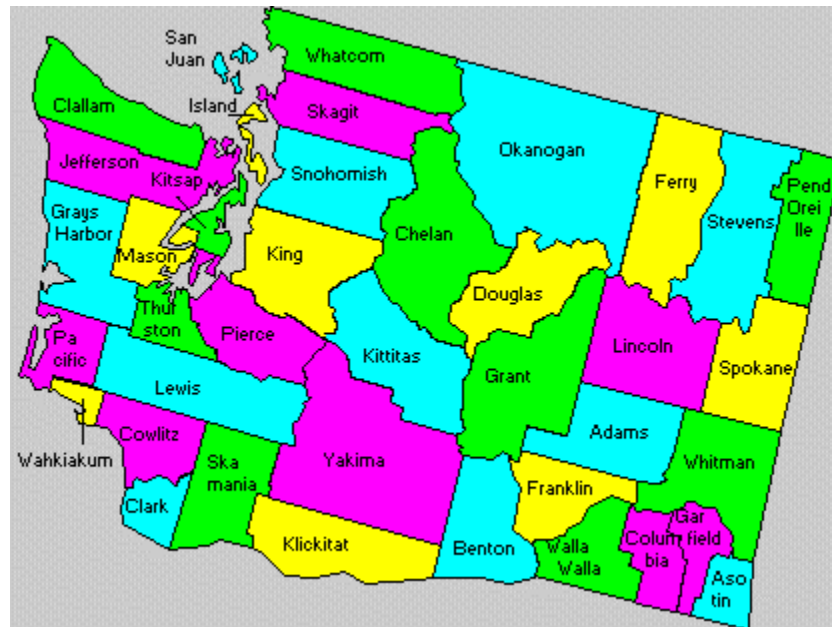
Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Seattle, WA

Profile of Drug Indicators

January 2000



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

Seattle, WA

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, funding, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics¹

- Population: 532,900 (1990 census) 536,600 (1997 estimate)
- Race/Ethnicity: White 388,858; Black 51,948; American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut 7,326; Asian or Pacific Islander 60,819; Hispanic Origin 18,349

Politics²

- Mayor: Paul Schell
- City Council Members: Sue Donaldson, Martha Choe, Richard Conlin, Jan Drago, Nick Licata, Richard McIver, Tina Podlodowski, Peter Steinbrueck, Margaret Pagler

Programs/Initiatives

- The Northwest HIDTA, designated in 1996, is a gateway of trade from Pacific Rim countries, having the second busiest commercial shipping region in the United States. As such, it increasingly appeals to drug traffickers as an entry point for illicit drugs, posing a major threat to the United States in terms of the importation of Southeast Asian heroin. Trafficking from poly-drug organizations has been a problem associated with the I-95 corridor; and methamphetamine labs in Washington state have doubled over the past three years.
- In FY 1999 the Office of National Drug Control Policy in Conjunction with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention awarded Seattle Public Schools \$100,000 under the Drug Free Community Support Program.
- Seattle Weed and Seed: The Seattle Department of Housing and Human Services in conjunction with the Seattle Police Department coordinate the program. It is designed to "weed" out violent crime, gang activity, and drug trafficking and then "seed" the neighborhood with social and economic revitalization. Seattle Weed and Seed has four main elements: 1) Law Enforcement 2) Community Policing 3) Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment 4) Neighborhood Restoration.³
- Cedar Hills Addictions Treatment Facility, Division of Alcohol & Substance Abuse Services: Comprehensive services including pick-up, assessment and treatment, education and training; information and referral; residential treatment; follow-up; and community service.⁴
- Seattle/King County Drug Involved Offender Task Force: The task force evaluates the current policies, which govern chemical dependency treatment services for offenders. The task force recommends a system with appropriate measures of punishment and treatment for offenders in order to affect offender behavioral change, reduce recidivism, and enhance public safety.⁵

Crime and Drug-Related Crime⁶

- The Crime Index Total fell from 56,857 in 1997 to 53,052 in 1998.

Number of Offenses Known to Police Seattle, 1998

Offenses	1998
Murder and non-negligent manslaughter	49
Forcible rape	242
Robbery	1,728
Aggravated assault	2,456
Burglary	6,959
Larceny-theft	33,327
Motor vehicle theft	8,109
Arson	182
Crime Index Total	53,052

- In Seattle during 1998 65.4% of male and 81.0% of female arrestees tested positive for drugs. Approximately 17% of both male and female arrestees tested positive for opiates.

Percent of Adult Arrestees Testing Positive for Drugs by Offense, Seattle 1998⁷

Offense	Cocaine		Marijuana		Meth		PCP		Any Drug	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Violent	26.0	33.3	28.0	44.4	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	66.7
Property	52.4	65.0	40.5	35.0	8.3	5.0	0.0	10.0	81.0	80.0
Drug	50.7	85.7	46.6	57.1	9.6	14.3	0.0	0.0	89.0	100
Prostitution	0.0	71.4	50.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	100
Other	25.4	40.0	31.5	40.0	5.4	6.7	0.8	0.0	54.6	73.3
Total	35.9	56.9	35.4	37.9	6.4	5.2	0.3	3.4	65.4	81.0

Drugs⁸

- Cocaine and Crack

Cocaine-related deaths in King County have begun to decline in 1997. Cocaine-related deaths peaked at 74 in 1996, then declined to 66 in 1997. During the first three-quarters of 1998 there was 40 deaths. Of the decedents 78% were male and 20% were African American.

Cocaine-related treatment admissions in publicly funded chemical dependency services also report a decrease in the total number of admissions. Over the past 2 years, cocaine admissions have declined 12.7%, while total treatment admissions have dropped 6.5%. Of those admitted for cocaine-related treatment there was an even number of males and females, they were also approximately 45% white and 45% black, and 90% were 25 or older. The primary method of use was smoking (80%) then injection (11%).

The basic unit of sale for cocaine is a "dime bag" or approximately 1/5 of a gram that sells for \$10 a bag. Grams of cocaine sell for \$35 to \$40, and larger units (1.75 grams) sell for \$70 and are usually of higher purity. Multiple ethnic gangs are

involved in the distribution of crack cocaine in King County and the price ranges from \$20 for a 1/8 gram to \$40 for a gram.

➤ Heroin

Heroin-related deaths and treatment admissions for heroin dependence have declined. Heroin injectors continue to fit a characteristic profile: they tend to be male, white, and middle-aged, and to use other drugs in addition to heroin.

Heroin-related deaths numbered 89 in 1994, and increased to 131 in 1995 and 135 in 1996. Heroin-related deaths in King County started to decrease in 1997 to 111.

Seattle/King County heroin-related treatment admissions numbered 1,200 to 1,600 for the years of 1994 to 1997. The primary method of use in Seattle is injection, and the heroin is most commonly used in combination with cocaine.

Prosecutions for heroin-related legal offenses remained between 2,200 and 2,600 annually from 1991-1996, and increased in 1997 to 3,142.

➤ Marijuana

Individuals who cited marijuana as their primary drug accounted for 652 or 19% of the total public treatment admissions in King County from July through December 1997. This rate is slightly higher than 15% in 1996.

The Washington State patrol (WSP) reports an influx of low-grade Mexican marijuana into Washington State at a rate of 5-10 tons per month. The THC content is relatively low (2-6 %), not particularly clean, and inexpensive. Most of this marijuana is transported over-ground by Mexican crime cartels. The U.S. Customs Service seized 1,950 pounds at various ports of entry during the period January 1992-september 1997.

Western Washington remains a site of sizeable indoor marijuana growing operations that produce high potency marijuana (sinsemilla). Both the Customs Service and the WSP report increased movement by U.S. growers of high-grade, indoor-grown marijuana to set up operations across the Canadian border. The product, in addition to being sold in Canada, is shipped back across the border to western Washington for sale.

Prices for marijuana from \$15-20 for a gram to \$40-50 per 1/8 an ounce, and \$70-80 for a 14 ounce. for locally grown sinsemilla. Larger quantities go for \$200-350 per ounce, \$575-650 per 1/4 pound. A pound of marijuana goes for \$2,000-8,000.

“Commercial” grade marijuana imported from Mexico, Thailand, Canada, or domestic locales sell for \$350-2,500 per pound.

➤ Methamphetamine

In King County stimulant treatment admissions totaled 5% of all admissions during 1997. According to the Washington State toxicologist, methamphetamine was detected in 84 fatalities statewide in 1997. Compared with the 146 methamphetamine-related fatalities reported for the 3-year period spanning 1993-95, this number represents a substantial increase. As of May 15, 1998, the State toxicologist reported 31 methamphetamine-related fatalities.

The King County Prosecuting attorney’s Office reported 80 felony filings for methamphetamine manufacturing/dealing and possession in 1997. This is a 280% increase over the 21 filings reported in 1994.

In 1997, the Washington State Patrol responded to 101 calls for assistance concerning clandestine “meth” labs or lab-related activity and 45 calls in 1998 through May 27.

The 101 calls represent a 129% increase over the 44 responses in 1994. The WSP also reports that more than 95% of significant methamphetamine seizures (multi-pounds or multi-kilograms) involve a product import form out of State (e.g., California, Texas, or Mexico) by Mexican nationals. According to the U.S. Customs Service, 29.4 pounds of methamphetamine were seized at the U.S.-Canadian border between January 1997 and April 1998.

Methamphetamine prices range from \$20-30 per 1/4 gram, and \$800-120 per gram (35-90% purity). Quantities of 1/16 ounce, known as "teeners" or "teenagers," now sell for \$100-140, and 1/8 ounce quantities, known as "eightballs," sell for \$200-240. Larger quantities sell for \$400-500 per 1/4 ounce and \$800-1,200 per ounce (50-90% purity).

➤ **Other Drugs**

Depressants, including Valium, Rohypnol, and GHB related deaths have increased from 19 in 1995 to 31 in 1996. There were 32 depressant-related deaths last year. Hallucinogens, including LSD, MDMA, and mushrooms, remain popular among youth in the King County area, and show up at concerts and "raves".

Trafficking and Seizures

- There were 16,213 grams of cocaine seized by the King County Sheriff's Department in 1998.

King County Sheriff's Office Drug Enforcement Unit Statistics 1996-1998⁹

	1996	1997	1998
Felonies	319	246	142
Search Warrants	43	45	36
Marijuana Grows	12	6	5
Clandestine Labs	25	20	43
Heroin	196,128 grams	588 grams	5,901 grams
Methamphetamine	2,270 grams	11,925 grams	5,432 grams
Cocaine	4,041 grams	2,459 grams	16,213 grams
Cash Seizures	\$500,558	\$183,296	\$589,039
Vehicle Seizures	38	28	66
Patrol Follow-ups	244	316	563
Narcotics Activity Reports	407	638	280
Investigators	10	9	10
Real Property Seized		11 @ \$1,850,000	10 @ \$1,725,000

Enforcement

- There was a total of 1,724 police employees in Seattle, Washington in 1997. Of which, 1,220 were officers and 504 were civilians.¹⁰

Pulse Check, January through June 1998.¹¹
Seattle, Washington

Reporting Of Drug Type	Use	Who's Using	Prevalent Method of Use	Drugs in Comb.	Who's Selling	Price/Purity	Other
Ethnographers Heroin	Sources report increase in use, but treatment admissions and deaths have declined	Typically middle-aged Caucasian males		Cocaine methamphetamine			
Law Enforcement Heroin	Stable; decline in heroin-related deaths; no increase in treatment admissions	30-35 yrs +; few young people; all ethnicities; both males and females	Injection, snorting, smoking (lace cigarettes), and mixed with food	Cocaine (speedball-ing) Alcohol (possibly)	Predominantly Hispanics, some African Americans, some Asians.	Black tar: \$80-100 per gram, \$4,000-\$2,000 per ounce; Southeast Asian: \$5,000-\$7,000 per ounce	Watching for more Southeast Asian heroin because of problems in Canada and CA
Ethnographers Crack/Cocaine	Decrease	Evenly spread among gender and ethnicities	Smoking Snorting Injection	Heroin	Multi-ethnic youth gangs	\$10 per 1/5 gram, \$35-40 per gram, \$70 per 1 3/4 gram ("Teener")	
Law Enforcement Crack/Cocaine		Decrease, but common	80% male; mostly over 25 yrs; 65% Caucasian/other, 35% African-American	Smoking Injection (less so) Snorting (less so)	Hispanic youth gangs, African-American adults; also sell methamphetamine, marijuana, heroin	Powder: \$10 per bag (200mg), \$70 per 1 3/4 grams; 80-90% purity. Crack: \$20 per 100-125 mg, \$40 per 200-250 mg; 40-60% purity	
Ethnographers Marijuana	Stable with very slight increase	Based on treatment admissions-70% male, 30% female; 54% Caucasian, 27% African-American, 6% Asian, 8% Hispanic, 6% Native American		Alcohol Methamphetamine	Mexican cartel; indoor growers	\$15-20 per gram sinsemilla, \$40-50 per 1/8 ounce, \$70-80 per 1/4 ounce, \$200-8,000 per lb.	
Law Enforcement Marijuana	Stable and widespread	All ethnic groups; all ages, both males and females		Alcohol	Caucasians control indoor growth and sell higher quality marijuana; Hispanics/Mexicans sell lower grade marijuana, Black Tar heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine	\$2,000+ per lb. For high quality; \$500-700 per lb. For Mexican marijuana	Very prevalent; concerned about young users, mixing with alcohol and driving

Consequences of Use

- The number of drug related deaths in Seattle fell 12.1% from 239 in 1996 to 210 in 1997.

Distribution of drug abuse deaths, Seattle 1996-97¹²

Selected Characteristics	1996	1997
Total drug-abuse episodes	239	210
GENDER		
Male	184	161
Female	54	46
RACE/ETHNICITY		
White	188	174
Black	35	26
Hispanic	9	2
Other	7	8
AGE		
6-17	3	0
18-25	20	21
26-34	47	45
35 and up	168	143
SELECTED DRUGS		
Alcohol-in-comb	99	94
Cocaine	81	74
Heroin/Morphine	150	136
Marijuana/Hashish	0	0
Methadone	11	16
Methamphetamine	3	4
PCP	0	0
Total Drug Mentions	498	485

- There were a total of 8,332 drug related emergency room episodes in Seattle during 1998.

Estimated Number of Drug Mentions in Emergency Room Episodes, Seattle, 1996-98¹³

Drug	1996	1997	1998
Cocaine	2,143	2,850	2,399
Heroin	2,442	2,922	2,439
Methamphetamine	195	479	266
Marijuana	897	1,663	936
Drug Episodes	8,476	10,593	8,332
Total Drug Mentions	13,743	18,228	13,927

Sources

- ¹ U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov/>
- ² State of Washington, City of Seattle, *Seattle Public Access Network* at <http://www.pan.ci.seattle.wa.us/>
- ³ State of Washington, Seattle Police Department Web site: <http://www.pan.ci.seattle.wa.us/spd/spdpan.htm>
- ⁴ State of Washington, Seattle/King County Department of Public Health web site at <http://www.metrokc.gov/health/>
- ⁵ State of Washington, Seattle/King County, *Drug Involved Offenders Task Force 1998*, June 1998.
- ⁶ U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States 1995-1997*, October 1996, September 1997, November 1998.
- ⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, *ADAM: 1998 Annual Report on Adult and Juvenile Arrestees*, April 1999.
- ⁸ Community Epidemiology Work Group, National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse Volume II: Proceedings*, June 1998.
- ⁹ State of Washington, Seattle/King County Department of Public Health, *Recent Drug Abuse Trends in the Seattle/King County Area*, December 1998.
- ¹⁰ U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States 1997*, Uniform Crime Reports, November 1998.
- ¹¹ Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Pulse Check: Trends in Drug Abuse, January-June 1998*, Winter 1998.
- ¹² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Drug Abuse Warning Network Annual Medical Examiner Data 1997*, December 1999.
- ¹³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services administration, *Year-End 1998 Emergency Department Data from the Drug Abuse Warning Network*, December 1999.

This State Profile was prepared by the ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse is funded by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and is a component of the [National Criminal Justice Reference Service](#) For further information concerning the contents of this profile or other drug policy issues contact:

The Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse
PO Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
1-800-666-3332
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>
ondcp@ncjrs.org

